

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims now pending. This listing replaces all earlier versions and listings of the claims.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A processing method of ordering and returning consumables, being performed by an information processing apparatus capable of communicating with a terminal via a communication network, said method comprising the steps of:

transmitting input screens containing data fields to the terminal for display, allowing a user to input data into the data fields to order a consumable and specify the return of the used consumable;

setting a flag in a memory unit of the information processing apparatus, the flag reflecting the data inputted by the user into the data fields to order consumables and to specify the return of the used consumable; and

transmitting display data, which includes a message (a) to prompt the user concerning the return of the used consumable in a case when the flag set in said setting step indicates that the return of the used consumable was not specified, and (b) indicating a history regarding the return rate indicating a ratio of quantities of the used consumables returned consumable by the user to consumables shipped and an incentive point corresponding to the [[user]] history regarding the return of the used consumable in a case when the flag set in said setting step indicates that the return of the used consumable was specified, to the terminal for display.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein,
when the user specifies in the data fields that the used consumable is to be returned, when the
ordered consumable is delivered, the used consumable is returned ~~when specified by the user~~.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein
the communication network includes the Internet.

Claims 5-40 (canceled)

Claim 41 (currently amended): A processing method of ordering and
returning consumables, being performed by an information processing apparatus capable of
communicating with a terminal via a communication network, said method comprising the
steps of:

receiving user log-in information from the terminal,

reading status information, which includes history information
regarding a used consumable returned by a user, from a database in accordance with the user
log-in information; and

transmitting data which includes ordering information of the
consumable, a part of the history information regarding the used consumable returned by the
consumer, and incentive point information, which is based on the history information
regarding the used consumable, to the terminal for display.

Claims 42-53 (canceled)

Claim 54 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41, further comprising a step of updating the status information in accordance with a notice indicating completion of the return of the used consumable.

Claim 55 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41, further comprising a step of calculating the incentive point in accordance with the status information.

Claim 56 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41, further comprising a step of devising a plan for the return of the used consumable.

Claim 57 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41, wherein the consumable includes a consumable used by an image forming apparatus.

Claim 58 (currently amended): A processing method of returning a used consumable, being performed by an information processing apparatus capable of communicating with a terminal via a communication network, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving user log-in information from the terminal;

reading result information, which includes history information regarding the used consumable returned by a user of the terminal, from a database in accordance with the user log-in information; and

providing information containing a part of the history information regarding the used consumable returned by the consumer and incentive point data to the

terminal for display, wherein the information processing apparatus determines the incentive point data [[is]] based on the history information.

Claim 59 (new): A method according to claim 41, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting input screens containing data fields to the terminal for display, allowing the user to input data into the data fields to specify the return of the used consumable;

setting a flag in a memory unit of the information processing apparatus, the flag reflecting the data inputted by the user into the data fields to specify the return of the used consumable; and

transmitting display data, which includes a message (a) to prompt the user concerning the return of the used consumable in a case when the flag set in said setting step indicates that the return of the used consumable was not specified, and (b) indicating a history regarding the return of the used consumable by the user and an incentive point corresponding to the history regarding the return of the used consumable in a case when the flag set in said setting step indicates that the return of the used consumable was specified, to the terminal for display.

Claim 60 (new): A method according to claim 58, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting input screens containing data fields to the terminal for display, allowing the user to input data into the data fields to specify the return of the used consumable;

setting a flag in a memory unit of the information processing apparatus, the flag reflecting the data inputted by the user into the data fields to specify the return of the used consumable; and

transmitting display data, which includes a message (a) to prompt the user concerning the return of the used consumable in a case when the status of the flag set in said setting step indicates that the return of the used consumable was not specified, and (b) indicating a history regarding the return of the used consumable by the user and an incentive point corresponding to the history regarding the return of the used consumable in a case when the status of the flag set in said setting step indicates that the return of the used consumable was specified, to the terminal for display.